United Nations S/PV.7529

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7529th meeting
Wednesday, 7 October 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2015/735)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/741)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2015/735)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/741)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); and Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

On behalf of the Council, I wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Martin Kobler, who is today delivering his last briefing to the Council in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have deeply appreciated his leadership of MONUSCO and sincerely wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/735, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region; and to document S/2015/741, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

Mr. Kobler (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to convey my warmest congratulations to Spain on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council. My mandate as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo is approaching its end. It is therefore an honour for me to present the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/741) for the final time, to inform the Council on the latest events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to present an overview of what we have achieved and what remains to be done.

Today, I would like to address three specific issues: the domestic situation and the electoral process, the security situation in the east, and the strategic dialogue.

(*spoke in English*)

At the end of my more than two years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I depart with a feeling of satisfaction and pride, but also with a sense that our mandate has not yet been fulfilled. I cannot say with certainty whether the progress attained is sustainable or whether the specter of violence can erupt again and reverse what has been achieved so far.

The political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is increasingly marked by the electoral process. Political tensions are running high ahead of the 2016 elections, and that will have an impact on the security situation, on the strategic dialogue and, ultimately, on the fulfillment of our mandate. The conduct of peaceful, timely and credible elections in November 2016 would send a clear message to the world that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a nation that respects its Constitution, a nation keen on a peaceful transition of power, and a nation that will consolidate peace.

I am, however, concerned by the increasing number of human rights violations related to the electoral process, particularly violations of freedom of peaceful assembly. Reducing political space ahead of the elections will undermine the credibility of the electoral process. I urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take all necessary measures to ensure that the legislative and presidential elections slated for November 2016 are transparent, credible and inclusive.

I appeal to the authorities to decisively and immediately address open questions related to the sequencing of the electoral calendar, while respecting the constitutional deadlines; the electoral budget; and the update of the voter registry to include eligible individuals who turned 18 since the elections of 2011. Nothing should be done to impede the timely holding of legislative and presidential elections in November 2016, as foreseen by the Constitution. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) will continue to play its good offices role in support of all political stakeholders and the people of the Congo.

The human rights situation warrants our attention as well. On 29 September, the Human Rights Council in Geneva expressed its concerns regarding the state of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; where more than 2,200 human rights violations affecting 5,400 victims have taken place this year so far. Half of these abuses were committed by State agents. Despite repeated calls, there has been only limited progress in bringing senior perpetrators to justice.

I turn now to the situation in the east. When I first arrived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August 2013, Goma was still recovering from the takeover by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23). In August 2015, I flew into a newly renovated airport in Goma with a major international commercial airline. The slow return of investors is a sure sign of improving stability and security in the city. In some islands of stability in the east, the State has demonstrated its ability to enhance the presence of the army and police, while a justice system is being established and basic services are delivered. In some parts of the east, displaced persons are gradually returning home. However, the population remains wary of a fragile peace that still needs to be consolidated. As a consequence, many Congolese continue to call on MONUSCO to protect them.

I am proud that the performance of the force has improved in recent years. This is due to the relentless efforts of the Force Commander and his Deputy. Foot and night patrols are now routine activities of the force. Though preventive action is difficult to quantify, I have no doubt that our presence and our early-warning mechanisms regularly protect the most vulnerable populations.

In the past two years, the M-23 has been militarily defeated, but military success alone is not durable. M-23 ex-combatants still sojourn in camps in Rwanda and Uganda. All efforts towards reintegration on the basis of the Nairobi Declaration have not succeeded thus far. This is a time bomb that must be urgently defused. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has been weakened while the area of its activities has shrunk. Last month, I visited Kamango, a town not far from the Ugandan border. For years, the town was terrorized by the ADF. Close to 120,000 people — 90 per cent of its population — fled out of fear for their lives in 2013, turning Kamango into a ghost town.

However, the brave combat of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces have resulted in the gradual return of 80,000 refugees since early 2014. I have seen a revitalized town centre with a flourishing market and vibrant economic activity. And the one consistent message I heard repeatedly during my visits is that MONUSCO's presence remains critical.

But this is ultimately not sufficient. It is the State that is needed to provide protective, judicial and administrative functions. FARDC and police capacity is still limited in the territory due to a lack of resources and personnel. We are indeed looking forward to seeing the Congolese forces taking over more and more of these crucial responsibilities from us, and we will remain available to support such a progressive, even tentative transfer.

Further West in the Beni area, however, the population continues to experience the anguish of armed conflict. The figure of 440 terror victims in one year alone speaks a clear language. The ADF is far from being defeated. I must admit that we should have done better. One victim is one too many. But still, through active patrolling and proactive action, we have prevented numerous killings.

The existence of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) remains one of the most important hindrances to peace in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nearly 12,000 FDLR ex-combatants have been repatriated over the past 12 years, but the last mile is always the most difficult. I welcome the criminal convictions and long prison terms recently handed down against two FDLR leaders by a court in Germany. I was particularly gratified by that court's designation of the FDLR as a terrorist organization. There is no question about it; still 1,100 FDLR elements continue to carry out numerous acts of

murder, rape, mutilation and cruel treatment, among other crimes. They have been oppressing the residents of eastern Congo for years. We must put an end to this reign of terror. I welcome the joint declaration of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo of 24 September that they will cooperate in the eradication of the FDLR. Neutralizing the FDLR in eastern Congo remains the single most important political/military objective.

The only efficient solution to address the security situation is joint MONUSCO-FARDC operations. In my most recent briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7484), I urged President Kabila to give the green light for joint operations. Unfortunately, the green light has not yet been given. I again call on the President to instruct the FARDC to resume cooperation, which produced so many positive results in the past. Only united can we ensure sustainable peace. Only united can we ensure that women and men attend to their fields. Only united can we ensure that children go to school.

MONUSCO has to gradually withdraw and exit from the Congo. The United Nations commitment to the people of the Congo, however, remains steadfast, as MONUSCO's exit strategy hinges on continued tangible progress on the ground. We cannot and must not exit hastily. The strategic dialogue between the United Nations and the Government is a forum specifically created to discuss and jointly agree on a progressive reduction of the Mission in the context of a mutually agreed exit strategy. Regrettably, our most recent joint assessment revealed that the security situation has not improved or even deteriorated in 21 territories out of 28 territories affected by armed conflicts.

Based on resolution 2211 (2015), I have proposed to the Congolese Government a three-phase process that would set in motion MONUSCO's exit strategy. Achieving our shared goal of a gradual withdrawal, without jeopardizing the gains already attained, will require further structured discussions between the Government and the United Nations and the broader international community. The Secretary-General has taken note of the Government's position in the context of the strategic dialogue and has indicated readiness to have a fresh look at the achievements presented by the Government.

I thank the Congolese Government for its support and its faith in MONUSCO. I am confident we will resolve the remaining problems in a constructive spirit.

The United Nations weight partly lies in the values that it upholds and defends on a daily basis. Sexual exploitation and abuse cases not only tarnish our reputation, but also add to the suffering and burden of the most vulnerable populations. They break that fundamental trust that people have in us. To echo the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy, I, along with the Force Commander and the Police Commissioner sensitized thousands of civilian and military peacekeepers in the last weeks. Moving forward, prevention and accountability should become ingrained in our modus operandi.

The implementation of the Addis Ababa agreement needs to be invigorated. Key reforms in the security sector, police, justice and corrections are essential for the long-term stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The lack of good governance, the absence of State authority, is one of the root causes of the conflict.

I commend my colleague Special Envoy Said Djinnit for his work, in particular I wish the private sector investment conference early next year plenty of success. To bolster private investment, foreign direct investment and Congolese investment, we must spare no efforts to ensure continued stability, security and the rule of law. The engagement of the team of the special envoys has been crucial throughout my tenure. I thank all colleagues for their unwavering support.

At the end, because this is my last meeting, allow me to mention one important topic beyond MONUSCO's mandate. This is my deep concern about the degradation of the environment and the deforestation of the Congolese rain-forest. The Democratic Republic of the Congo's natural resources are a blessing. The country's unique natural heritage must be preserved for future generations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Africa and in the world.

I wish to thank the Security Council for its unwavering support and for giving the Democratic Republic of the Congo the attention it rightly deserves. I also want to express my gratitude to Headquarters colleagues, in particular Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Mr. Hervé Ladsous and his team for the continuous support and valuable guidance in difficult times. To Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui for her commitment and tireless efforts in getting children out of the hands of brutal armed groups. For Special Representative Zainab Bangura for her engagement and support to

the Mission in stopping the scourge of sexual violence and easing the pain of thousands of women and girls victims in the Congo.

Allow me also to thank all military, police and civilian colleagues in MONUSCO in the United Nations country team for working to fulfil our promise to the people of the Congo. The friendship of the team was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my professional life.

(*spoke in French*)

For the past two years, I have travelled throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have actively tried to listen to all segments of Congolese society to truly understand and respond to the people's expectations. I met with representatives of women's and youth organizations, villagers in markets, former child soldiers and many others whose lives have been forever altered by war. They are a daily reminder of the thousands of people who are counting on us. We have the duty and responsibility to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is secure and stable, and that the progress that has been achieved thus far will not be lost.

Allow me here to commend the perseverance and resilience of the Congolese who have witnessed the horrors of war, the women who have suffered the horrors of violence and the children who have lost their innocence at the hands of brutal combatants. They are the reason why MONUSCO stands firm and calls for the respect for human rights. They are the reason why we are calling for a gradual drawdown, and not a hasty one, of the Force. They are the reason why our civilian, police and military staff are working tirelessly in the pursuit of peace. Allow me to warmly thank the Congolese people for the hospitality that they have always shown us as guests in their country. I have great admiration for their strength and deep aspirations for peace and progress.

The seeds of a stable, secure and resilient Congo have already been planted. I will be following their journey from afar with the hope that we will see them bloom and prosper in the years to come. It was an honour to serve the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Martin Kobler for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Djinnit.

Mr. Djinnit (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2015/735). My colleague, Martin Kobler, has just addressed the Council. On this occasion, as he is about to leave his post as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), I would like to express my utmost appreciation for his contribution to peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. I also express my gratitude for the support he has given me in carrying out my mission and his support for MONUSCO.

Since the report submitted to the Security Council in March (S/2015/173), there has been some progress in the implementation of the Framework Agreement, but it remains marked by challenges that have hindered our efforts to achieve its objectives. The persistence of armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the violence they have perpetrated against our populations remain one of the greatest challenges to peace and security in the region. These negative forces perpetuate tension and foster a climate of distrust in the region. Undoubtedly, for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is imperative that they be neutralized within the framework of its efforts aimed at consolidating State authority throughout the country and ensuring the safety and security of its citizens and their property. Their neutralization is also a regional imperative in order to achieve peace and security in this region in transition, to eliminate a source of suspicion and distrust, and to create a more favourable environment for cooperation, development and regional integration.

In this regard, I would like to commend once again the operations carried out by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against the armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). However, these operations would benefit from being strengthened by the full support of MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Security Council. I take this opportunity, as was done by the regional oversight mechanism during its meeting of 29 September, held in New York, to call for the resumption of joint operations between FARDC

and MONUSCO against all armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and, in particular, the FDLR.

The decisive military action against the FDLR must also be accompanied by determined efforts to accelerate the repatriation of ex-FDLR combatants who are in the transit camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During my visit in July to Bahuma transit camp in Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I encouraged the ex-FDLR combatants and their dependents to accept their repatriation to Rwanda, with the support of the United Nations and other regional actors. I also visited the Mutobo demobilization and reintegration centre in Rwanda where I was able to see that the structure is ready to accommodate the ex-FDLR combatants and their dependants.

The issue of repatriation also concerns the former fighters of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), several hundred of whom are still in Uganda and Rwanda. My Office and MONUSCO have encouraged and neem associated with several initiatives led by the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and aimed at facilitating the repatriation of former M-23 combatants and implementation of the provisions of the Nairobi Declarations, in cooperation with Uganda and Rwanda. They have not been successful, because the former M-23 leaders have continued raise concerns about security and other political issues in order to oppose repatriation. It is urgent that M-23 ex-combatants be repatriated to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and all the provisions of the Declarations implemented in good faith. For my part, I will continue, in collaboration with the ICGLR and MONUSCO, and in concert with the group of Special Envoys, to support current efforts to complete the process and encourage decisive actions aimed at countering all the negative forces in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

In that context, I would like to commend the meeting between the Ministers of Defence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda held on 23 and 24 September, based on which they agreed to develop practical ways to eradicate the FDLR and speed up the repatriation of former M-23 combatants cantoned in Rwanda and former FDLR combatants cantoned in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is an important step forward in relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. We should encourage States in the region to initiate direct contacts and discuss their respective concerns in order to reduce sources of suspicion and tension and gradually build mutual trust.

In that spirit, I welcome the arrest of Jamil Mukulu in Tanzania in April and his subsequent extradition to Uganda. I also welcome the fact that on 28 September, after four years of proceedings, FDLR leaders Ignace Murwanashyaka and Straton Musoni were convicted in Germany of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo between 2008 and 2009. I take this opportunity to encourage States of the region to prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes and strengthen their judicial cooperation in combating impunity, in accordance with the relevant ICGLR protocols, whose implementation we support.

The other major challenge in the region relates to the electoral process and the risks of tension and political crises that can result from it. We are still dealing with the problem of the disputed elections in Burundi, which were accompanied by serious disturbances marked by violence and violations of human rights. We encourage all the parties involved to engage in inclusive dialogue mediated under the auspices of the East African Community, which the United Nations is fully committed to supporting, together with the African Union and other regional and international partners. Like many of our partners who are anxious to preserve this country's stability and democratic achievements, we call for this inclusive dialogue to be resumed as soon as possible. We also sincerely hope that the situation in Burundi can be resolved as quickly as possible and will not further affect relations between the States of the region.

In view of the fact that several States of the region are preparing to hold presidential elections in 2016 and 2017, now is the time to urge all the parties involved to exercise restraint, emphasize respect for their constitutional documents and ensure that they use legal instruments and inclusive dialogue to settle all election-related issues in the region. We urge them to do everything possible to consolidate their democratic gains and maintain stability in their countries and their region, whose peoples aspire legitimately to peace and economic and social progress.

During the reporting period, we continued to pay close attention to the underlying causes of instability

in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, including the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which continues to be a factor in regional conflicts. My Office has also been working with other institutions to promote an integrated regional approach that will enable us to better manage the flow of refugees and displaced persons and come up with sustainable solutions to humanitarian crises.

Conscious of the key role that women will have to play in transforming the region and promoting the objectives of the Framework Agreement, my Office continues to support development projects designed to benefit women in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda within the framework of resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant Security Council resolutions. Those efforts also fall into the framework of a platform for women that we have established to work within the ICGLR's institutional mechanism and women's forum. My Office is also supporting ICGLR initiatives for young people and civil society and ensuring that those processes include a contribution by those groups to the implementation of the Framework Agreement's objectives and follow-up.

On the economic front, we are preparing for a conference on private sector investment in the Great Lakes region, scheduled for 24 and 25 February 2016 in Kinshasa. This exciting and absorbing task has been entrusted to our Office and the ICGLR secretariat, together with the host country. We have obtained the support of other United Nations institutions and structures, along with that of multilateral and bilateral partners and representatives of the private sector, to help us create the right conditions for the conference.

Lastly, regarding the implementation process of the Framework Agreement, in collaboration with the African Union we have proposed a plan for reforming the Agreement's governance mechanism, the Regional Oversight Mechanism and its Technical Support Committee, designed to strengthen the signatory States' ownership. The proposals were considered and adopted at a ministerial retreat held in Nairobi on 10 July and subsequently endorsed at the sixth High-level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held here in New York on 29 September.

(*spoke in English*)

In conclusion, I note that since its signing in February 2013, there can be no doubt that the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement has contributed significantly to stabilizing the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in neutralizing the M-23, thanks to the joint operation of the FARDC and MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade. It would appear, however, that the momentum sparked by the combined impact of the Framework Agreement and Security Council resolution 2098 (2013) is fading. The lack of progress in neutralizing the FDLR and implementing the Nairobi Declarations is probably one of the reasons for the diminishing interest in the Framework Agreement process. The challenges related to the electoral processes in several countries in the region may also have helped to divert attention from the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework process.

The proposals for reforming and reactivating the Framework's governance structures that were recently endorsed by the Regional Oversight Mechanism have the potential to renew interest in the process. I take this opportunity to appeal to all the stakeholders concerned to fully assume their various roles and to the signatory countries to show greater political will in implementing the commitments they have made. In the weeks and months ahead, I will engage with the signatory countries and guarantors of the Framework to explore ways and means to increase the momentum needed to implement this instrument for peace, security and. cooperation in the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Djinnit for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor in the Council, I would like at the outset to perform the pleasant duty of congratulating you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I would also like to echo the unanimous commendations of the Russian presidency of the Council last month.

I would like to sincerely thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his commitment to the defence and promotion of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as for the tireless efforts he continues to lead to restore peace in my country, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This meeting also gives me the opportunity to greet Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Said Djinnit, Special

Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. I am grateful to them for their presentation of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/741), and that on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region (S/2015/735). I also acknowledge the key nature of the briefings that they have just made.

I would like to confine myself to briefly setting out the points of view of my Government on a certain number of questions raised in the reports before us.

In regard to child protection, in particular the issue of child soldiers, my Government recalls that since 2001 the recruitment of children has been formally outlawed in my country. Indeed, the Government has taken drastic measures to eradicate the phenomenon, first by carrying out a biometrics census within the army, and then through the enactment and strict enforcement of the law and other regulatory measures on child protection.

To date, with 46,000 child soldiers identified by the Government and returned to civilian life, there are no more children within the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), as attested to by the joint audit mission conducted by UNICEF and the Democratic Republic of Congo from October 2014 to March 2015, whose report was transmitted to the United Nations on 22 May. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is determined to neutralize all armed groups that recruit children. As pointed out in paragraph 71 of the current report, and citing the example of the decision of the Military High Court dated 8 November 2014, which found a senior officer of the national army guilty for sexual violence and child recruitment and demoted him, we reaffirm here our firm determination to bring to justice all persons found guilty of engaging in child recruitment, particularly the supposed perpetrators of the kinds of violations inscribed on the list.

As to the issue of sexual violence, which rightly alarms national and international public opinion, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Republic, has taken draconian measures to eradicate these scourges, which were due mainly to newly integrated armed groups. In response, the Supreme Commander took strong measures, particularly by decreeing zero tolerance in that sphere, by deploying mobile courts throughout the country to render justice, by prioritizing the diligent judicial treatment of cases of sexual violence for a total of 135 judgments handed down in 2014, by targeting senior officers of the army, and by appointing a special representative responsible for combating sexual violence and the recruitment of child soldiers.

Today, thanks to the active cooperation of the United Nations system as a whole, multilateral and bilateral partners, and civil society through the implementation and supervision of the military plan on combating sexual violence of October 2014, significant progress has been made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in combating sexual violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. I would ask the Security Council to take due note thereof, and to duly take into account those positive developments of the situation in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Turning to neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the FARDC has itself conducted operations of forced disarmament against that negative force following the withdrawal of MONUSCO forces. Initially estimated at 1,200 FDLR elements — a figure confirmed by the joint mission of the chiefs-of-staff of the countries of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), including that of the Republic of Rwanda — FDLR numbers have been significantly reduced. The rise in power of the FARDC and the effectiveness of their operations against the FDLR have achieved significant degradation of that negative force. Moreover, vast human and material sacrifices have been made by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, allowing us to achieve the following results. During the phase of voluntary surrender, from May 2014 to 20 January 2015, 438 FDLR surrendered; during the intermediate phase, from 2 to 27 January 2015, 13 FDLR surrendered; and during the forced disarmament phase, from 28 January to 31 July 2015, 415 FDLR were neutralized. As to the residual FDLR force, 334 FDLR fighters remain to be neutralised.

As the report of the Secretary-General states, disarmed FDLR ex-combatants have been cantoned in well-identified sites. Their number can therefore easily be certified. Responding on 11 February to a question from an elected member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security of the Rwandan Parliament, General James Kabarebe, the Rwandan Minister of Defence, affirmed that the FDLR no longer constituted a military threat to Rwanda. In

other words, even the Rwandan authorities recognize the remarkable progress achieved to put to an end to the threat of that negative force.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo wishes to confirm its firm resolve to continue operations against all negative forces until their total neutralization. The support of MONUSCO and that of the United States Africa Command, where it is most needed, in support of the efforts of the Government, is greatly appreciated and we thank them sincerely.

My Government reiterates its appeal for greater involvement on the part of the international community in general, and of the Security Council in particular, in the repatriation to Rwanda or the swift reintegration in a third country outside the Great Lakes region of FDLR ex-combatants who have been disarmed and cantoned in Walungu, Kayabayonga and Kisangali. Pending their repatriation or reintegration, material provision for those people and their families should continue to be provided by the international community so as to prevent any risk of backsliding, with unpredictable consequences.

Turning to the specific case of the former Mouvement du 23 mars (ex-M23), and the sluggishness noted in the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration, we note that this rebel movement was defeated militarily on 5 November 2013 that and its combatants fled to Rwanda and Uganda; 786 were taken in by Rwanda and about 1,600 in Uganda. Two identification missions were despatched by the Democratic Republic of Congo to Rwanda and Uganda before the repatriation of the defeated ex-M23s. While the results on the ground have helped identify the presence of 1,600 ex-combatants in Uganda, by contrast, in Rwanda, we have noted only 453.

As noted by the Secretary-General in paragraph 75 of his report, the lack of progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of 12 December 2013 carries risks both for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. That failure is mainly due to bad faith on the part of the ex-M23. Indeed, the official representative of M-23 appointed to the National Oversight Mechanism of the Framework Agreement, Mr. René Abandi, never came to Kinshasa to occupy his offices and participate in the various meetings to assess the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration road map. All invitations to him, as well as the appeals of the international community, have so far all gone unanswered.

In that context, the meetings scheduled for 20 May 2014 in Goma and 1 September 2014 in Kinshasa were boycotted by Mr. René Abandi, who had proposed instead a meeting in Kampala. In the presence of the Special Representatives and Envoys, guarantors of the Framework Agreement, and pursuant to the Nairobi Declaration, an official invitation was sent to him for the meetings of 7 and 8 November 2014 in Kinshasa. He also declined that invitation.

The National Oversight Mechanism established a road map to address the assessment of commitments undertaken by the Government under the Nairobi Declaration. Several meetings to assess the road map were held in the presence of the guarantors of the Framework Agreement, who all condemned the absence of the representative of the former M-23, which blocked any significant progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration.

The working group — made up of representatives from the United Nations, the ICGLR, the Government of Uganda and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and established at the request of the Luanda Summit of May 18 — noted that the political and military leadership of the ex-combatants of the M-23, based in Kampala and headed by Messrs. Sultani Makenga and Bertrand Bisimwa, continued to influence former combatants by urging them to refuse repatriation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On that basis, it should be noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the only party to implement the Nairobi Declaration. On the other hand, the former M-23 combattants refuse systematically to honour their commitments and oppose the voluntary repatriation of their combatants, despite the flexibility shown by the President of the Republic in deciding to repatriate them unconditionally to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration sites and, thereafter, to allow them to reintegrate within communities of each individual's own free choosing.

We agree with the Secretary-General that it is important for all other stakeholders concerned — especially those sheltering ex-combatants of M-23 — to translate their commitments into actions and find lasting political solutions to the obstacles preventing the repatriation of these ex-combatants and their reintegration within the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The conclusions of the meeting of 24 September in Kigali between the Ministers of Defence of the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda bodes well for moving the process forward, both in terms of the repatriation of ex-combatants of M-23 living in Rwanda, as well as the eradication of residual FDLR forces in the Congo. My Government continues to believe that if the command of the ex-combatants of M23 obstinately continues to refuse to comply with the provisions of the Nairobi Declaration, sanctions should be applied against them in accordance with the decision taken by the Heads of State of signatory countries to the Framework Agreement, who met in New York on 29 September in the context of the sixth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

Today, we can note a significant restoration of State authority throughout the country. At the military level, three rapid-reaction brigades are already operating with personnel previously deployed and the scheduled individual and corps equipment. Territorial authorities have been created; the police have been deployed; courts and tribunals are functioning properly again; internally displaced persons and some refugees have begun to return to their homes; and the army is present throughout the country to combat armed groups, where it is necessary and to protect the population.

On the political front, as Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has reminded us here at the United Nations, in accordance with the electoral calendar published by the Independent National Electoral Commission, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is preparing for general elections for the third time following those of 2006 and 2011. The organization of those elections, scheduled for the 2015-2016 cycle, marks a definitive break in the spiral of violence and instability that has characterized the process in recent decades and engages the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a perennial democratic culture.

For the Congolese Foreign Minister, despite the many financial and logistical constraints that have marked the electoral process, the Independent National Electoral Commission, with the help of the Government, is doing all in its power to meet the challenge of organizing elections that respect all international standards in terms of inclusiveness, transparency, credibility — and all of this against a backdrop of peace.

To that end, convinced that dialogue is a central pillar of democracy and a component of social cohesion, Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Republic, has undertaken considerable efforts since May to increase contacts with all segments of Congolese society — including political actors, civil society, and religious and traditional authorities — to launch a national dialogue that seeks to establish consensus on the electoral process under way. With each of these segments having had the opportunity to express its point of view, a review of all the opinions voiced will allow us to reach a lasting consensus on the elections that will truly reflect the will of the Congolese people, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution.

The Government duly appreciates the valuable observations and recommendations contained in paragraphs 72 and 73 of the report, and calls on the United Nations and the international community as a whole to support steadfastly and at every stage an electoral process that respects the Constitution, human rights and fundamental political rights and freedoms.

Regarding the strategic dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations, official talks have stalled, as the Secretary-General recognizes in paragraph 42 of his report. My Government has been hoping for a successful outcome to the strategic dialogue engaged with MONUSCO, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, since March 2015 with with a view to developing an action plan and exit strategy for MONUSCO, especially as its terms of reference have been agreed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, because they cover all of the major concerns of the Government.

Far be it from me to go into the details of the exchanges. I agree with the Secretary-General that the dialogue must offer an opportunity to rethink and bolster the partnerships between the Government and the United Nations. My Government, which remains committed to continuing discussions with the United Nations in a spirit of mutual trust believes, however, that the United Nations presence in Congolese territory must be reconsidered and that the personnel of MONUSCO contingents must be progressively reviewed.

I take this opportunity to thank the international community, which came to the aid of my country in protecting its territorial integrity and sovereignty. I also echo the Foreign Minister of the Democratic

Republic of Congo in commending the international solidarity that the Republic has enjoyed on the part of other Member States, in particular those that have contributed troops to MONUSCO.

I hail the determination of the Congolese people, who — having suffered the yoke of an unnecessary and equally unjustified war — spared no sacrifice to preserve the sovereignty and integrity of our national territory against all odds. I also heartily commend the defence and security forces of my country for their concerted action in the service of peace. The obligation now incumbent upon the Government of the Republic of the Congo and all of its partners is to ensure the consolidation of all of those achievements.

The strategic dialogue under way with the the United Nations must therefore result in a recommendation for a significant drawdown of the military component of MONUSCO. My country expects the Security Council to support this legitimate and responsible request of a State Member of the United Nations, in full exercise of its sovereignty — a request that already enjoys the support of the regional economic communities of which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a member: the Southern African Development Community, the ICGLR and the African Union.

In conclusion, I would be remiss if I finished my statement without welcoming and expressing my full appreciation of the partnership that has been so successfully established between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Security Council for the return of normalcy to my country, so that my people can finally benefit from the peace dividends.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.